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PTQ9487

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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AID-00	ARA-01	A-00	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-01	EUR-01
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00
	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NEA-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIS-01	OMB-01	PA-02	PM-00	PRS-01
	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-09	G-00	/045W

-----02C444 242047Z /38

R 242045Z NOV 95

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9041

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//SCCC//

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 007368

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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TAGS: PREL, PTER, LE, AR

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON

DATE/CASE ID: 20 MAY 2008 200601030

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SUBJECT: MENEM RECEIVES LEBANESE LEADER

REF: BEIRUT 4276

1. SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT; PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

2. PRESIDENT CARLOS MENEM HONORED LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER RAFIC HARIRI WITH THE ORDER OF THE LIBERATOR GENERAL SAN MARTIN ON NOVEMBER 20, DURING THE LATTER'S THREE-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO ARGENTINA. DURING THE CEREMONY, MENEM SPOKE OF HARIRI AS "ONE WHO HAS FOUGHT CONSISTENTLY FOR PEACE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS COUNTRY." MENEM ALSO HOSTED HARIRI AT A WORKING LUNCH AT OLIVOS, THE PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE, IN WHICH THE TWO REPORTEDLY WERE TO DISCUSS INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION AIMED AT BRINGING THE PERPETRATORS OF THE 1992 ISRAELI EMBASSY BOMBING AND THE 1994 ATTACK ON THE ARGENTINE JEWISH MUTUAL ASSOCIATION (AMIA) TO JUSTICE. DESPITE THE SIMILARITY OF THESE BOMBINGS TO OTHERS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN SPONSORED BY MIDDLE EASTERN GROUPS, THE GOA SO FAR HAS FAILED TO COME UP WITH INDEPENDENT, COURT-ADMISSIBLE EVIDENCE THAT HEZBOLLAH -- THE PRIME SUSPECT IN THE GOA'S EYES -- CARRIED OUT OR ASSISTED IN THE TWO TERRORIST ATTACKS. COMMENT: MENEM REMAINS UNDER A GREAT DEAL OF PRESSURE FROM BUENOS AIRES JEWISH LEADERS TO MAKE HEADWAY IN SOLVING BOTH CASES AND PROBABLY WOULD NOT PASS UP THE OPPORTUNITY TO PITCH FOR HARIRI'S HELP. END COMMENT. ON NOVEMBER 22, HARIRI ATTENDED AN INDEPENDENCE DAY

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RECEPTION AT THE LEBANESE MISSION IN BUENOS AIRES.

3. HARIRI INCLUDED PRIVATE MEETINGS IN HIS AGENDA IN BUENOS AIRES. ON NOVEMBER 21, HE BREAKFASTED WITH BUSINESS GROUPS, AND HE MADE A SPEECH THAT EVENING AT THE ARGENTINE COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, WHICH HAS RECENTLY HOSTED OTHER FOREIGN DIGNITARIES TO SPEAK ON THE GENERAL THEME OF PEACE AND POLITICAL TOLERANCE.

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4. COMMENT: SENSITIVE TO THE CONTROVERSY OF MIDDLE EASTERN ISSUES DOMESTICALLY, THE GOA HAS KEPT THE HARIRI VISIT FAIRLY LOW-KEY. OFFICIALS ARE HOPING TO AVOID THE TYPE OF CONTROVERSY GENERATED BY RECENT CONTACTS WITH SYRIA ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, IN FACT, USED THE SIMULTANEOUS VISIT OF THE TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO DEFLECT SOME ATTENTION FROM HARIRI'S ACTIVITIES IN BUENOS AIRES. OTHER THAN ROUTINE PHOTO OPS WITH PRESIDENT MENEM, HARIRI'S VISIT GENERATED LITTLE PRESS PLAY LOCALLY. MENEM'S SYRIAN FAMILY ROOTS, USUALLY REFERRED TO ON PRESS STORIES TOUCHING ON MIDDLE EASTERN ISSUES, WERE NOT EVEN MENTIONED IN PASSING THIS TIME AROUND.

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